

**STATE OF ALABAMA**

**APPALACHIAN STRATEGY  
STATEMENT**

**FY-2003**

**DON SIEGELMAN  
GOVERNOR**

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## **Introduction**

*Mission statement of ARC: ARC's mission is to be an advocate for and partner with the people of Appalachia to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life.*

Thirty-seven counties in northern Alabama are included in the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), of which, seven are classified as “distressed” and eligible for additional funding.

This strategy statement was written with the assistance of the eight Local Development Districts in Alabama: West Alabama Regional Commission, Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments, Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments, North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments, South Central Alabama Development Commission, Central Alabama Regional Planning Commission, and East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission and Trey Coleman of the Appalachian Regional Commission staff in Washington.

## **Overview of ARC Alabama**

ARC is a regional economic development agency representing a unique partnership of federal, state, and local government designed to address local needs through a non-categorical grant program. Established by an act of Congress in 1965, an historic five-year reauthorization through FY2006 was enacted in March 2002.

ARC is composed of the governors of 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chairman, who is appointed by the president. Grassroots participation is provided through state support and multi-county local development districts (LDD's) with boards composed of elected officials, business people, and other local leaders. Each year Congress appropriates funds, which ARC allocates among its member states. The Appalachian governors prepare annual Appalachian strategy statements, such as this one, and select projects for ARC approval for funding.

The development organization for ARC Alabama functions within the Governor's Office. Administration responsibilities for the development programs of the ARC were assigned by the Governor to the Director of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). As such, the Director serves as an Alternate State Member of the Commission. There are eight LDD's in Alabama's Appalachian Region, and each LDD operates under a Board of Directors. (See Appendix 1 for a complete listing of LDD's).

### *Strategic Goals*

One of the key differences between ARC and other federal institutions is the discretion given to the 13 states in determining how their allocated funds will be spent. Funds must be spent within those counties designated as a part of the Appalachian Regional Commission and meet one or more of ARC's 5 strategic goals and State objectives:

ARC Goal One: *Appalachian residents will have the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in the world economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

**State Objective 1.1:** To develop a workforce that is educated and well trained for employment.

State Strategy 1.1.1: Strengthen programs that provide basic skills and workforce training to increase employee capabilities, improve job skills, and upgrade marketable skills.

State Strategy 1.1.2: Support workforce readiness programs that will provide the necessary skills to get jobs.

State Strategy 1.1.3: Strengthen basic skills programs in the public school system and establish specific competency requirements.

State Strategy 1.1.4: Continue to improve public education through the implementation of statewide reforms.

State Strategy 1.1.5: Support programs to improve teacher quality by increasing professional development programs.

**State Objective 1.2:** Support initiatives that promote lifelong learning.

State Strategy 1.2.1: Support programs to promote education excellence.

State Strategy 1.2.2: Support initiatives that address early childhood education needs.

State Strategy 1.2.3: Support programs and mobilize resources to increase adult literacy.

State Strategy 1.2.4: Support programs and initiatives that provide for career planning and placement.

State Strategy 1.2.5: Utilize telecommunications, computers, and other technological capabilities to deliver education and training programs.

**State Objective 1.3:** Support programs to reduce the school dropout rate in our Appalachian counties to equal or better than the national average.

State Strategy 1.3.1: Support programs and initiatives to reduce the school dropout rate.

State Strategy 1.3.2: Support educational programs in K-12 that will expand and improve current programs.

State Strategy 1.3.3: Support programs that will expand the use of telecommunications in education, especially K-12.

**State Objective 1.4:** Support initiatives to provide opportunities for a quality preschool experience through parent support programs, quality childcare and preschool programs.

State Strategy 1.4.1: Assist communities in developing programs and services for families and caregivers of young children that will ensure that all children are healthy and prepared to succeed in school.

State Strategy 1.4.2: Support initiatives that will provide technical assistance to communities on marketing, long-term financing, and resource identification for the continuation of exceptional programs.

State Strategy 1.4.3: Support initiatives that will help parents and caregivers learn positive skills to help them meet the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of all children.

ARC Goal Two: *Appalachian communities will have the physical infrastructure necessary for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life.*

**State Objective 2.1:** Continue to support the development of our Appalachian Development Highway Corridors (X and V).

State Strategy 2.1: Complete Corridors X and V based on projected annual ARC funding.

**State Objective 2.2:** Support efforts to develop intermodal transportation corridors in Appalachian Alabama.

State Strategy 2.2.1: Work with state and local partners to identify and develop intermodal transportation facilities.

**State Objective 2.3:** Support efforts to bring adequate telecommunications to Appalachian counties.

State Strategy 2.3.1: Work toward implementation of Alabama's Strategic Plan for Telecommunications in Appalachia.

State Strategy 2.3.2: Support efforts to link new and existing telecommunication networks.

State Strategy 2.3.3: Support training in the public, private, and non-profit sectors in Appalachian Alabama in the use of new technologies and applications.

State Strategy 2.3.4: Support projects that will evaluate existing architecture, infrastructure and equipment or facilitate the development of new applications and networks.

State Strategy 2.3.5: Support projects that will assist in the development of architecture infrastructure and equipment for new networks.

State Strategy 2.3.6: Support special innovative service telecommunications applications and programs.

**State Objective 2.4:** Give Appalachian counties access to safe drinking water and wastewater facilities.

State Strategy 2.4.1: Make safe drinking water available by improving water treatment plants so they meet Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

State Strategy 2.4.2: The State will give priority to projects that extend water lines to communities where there is no service, or where there is an existing health hazard.

State Strategy 2.4.3: The State will give priority to projects that provide access to water and wastewater services in areas of highest need, areas that are economically depressed, areas that suffer high unemployment, and areas that have health hazards.

State Strategy 2.4.4: The State will give priority to projects that provide wastewater service to residential areas where more than 50% of septic tanks are failing.

State Strategy 2.4.5: Improve living conditions by supporting the installation of on-site waste treatment systems with proven alternative technologies.

State Strategy 2.4.6: Encourage regional solutions to solid waste problems.

**State Objective 2.5:** Alabama will support the development of industrial sites, industrial/business parks, commercial development, or business incubators in Appalachian Alabama.

State Strategy 2.5.1: Provide water, sewer, and physical infrastructure needed to serve new and expanding industries and commercial development.

State Strategy 2.5.2: Support development of new industrial sites.

State Strategy 2.5.3: Construct industrial access roads to new or expanding industrial sites.

State Strategy 2.5.4: Provide capital funding for the development of small business incubators.

State Strategy 2.5.5: Extend rail spurs into industrial areas, with a priority on those that serve multiple sites.

State Strategy 2.5.6: Develop "smart parks" with telecommunications infrastructure, which will meet the needs of information industries.

ARC Goal Three: *The people and organizations of Appalachia will have the vision and capacity to mobilize and work together for sustained economic progress and improvement of their communities.*

**State Objective 3.1:** Increase economic progress and local capacity through strategic planning, technology, and leadership development.

State Strategy 3.1.1: Support efforts to establish ongoing local leadership training programs.

State Strategy 3.1.2: Support youth leadership development efforts through leadership training, experience-based education programs, apprenticeships, youth-operated enterprises, and cooperative education activities.

State Strategy 3.1.3: Assist local communities to institute strategic planning and direction for future progress and improvement.

State Strategy 3.1.4: Encourage local leaders to explore innovative, cost-effective arrangements for delivery of services, including service consolidations.

State Strategy 3.1.4: Support local efforts to form partnerships, both short-term and long-term, between local governments, nonprofit community-based groups, and private businesses for economic and community improvement.

ARC Goal Four: *Appalachian residents will have access to financial and technical resources to help build dynamic and self-sustaining local economies.*

**State Objective 4.1:** Pursue tourism development as an economic development tool and as a direct economic growth impact.

State Strategy 4.1.1: Support local efforts to increase economic development through tourism to attract foreign and domestic travelers to meet the national average.

State Strategy 4.1.2: Support infrastructure development to increase tourism based on economic impact.

State Strategy 4.1.3: Support training programs and workshops on local tourism development.

**State Objective 4.2:** Coordinate and strengthen local economic development efforts.

State Strategy 4.2.1: Support training programs in economic planning and development and in export development.

State Strategy 4.2.2: Support programs that will stimulate increased export trade development.

State Strategy 4.2.3: Support programs that increase participation of Appalachian companies in trade events.

State Strategy 4.2.4: Assist existing firms in marketing their products and services in international markets.

State Strategy 4.2.5: Encourage and support revolving loan fund capitalization efforts for Local Development Districts.

State Strategy 4.2.6: Support initiatives to increase entrepreneurship in Appalachian Alabama, including providing resources to assist entrepreneurs in starting and expanding local businesses.

State Strategy 4.2.7: Promote the integration of the elements of an entrepreneurial system at the state or regional level.

ARC Goal Five: *Appalachian residents will have access to affordable, quality health care.*

**State Objective 5.2:** Reduce the infant mortality rate in Appalachian counties that have rates 1.5 times greater than the national average.

State Strategy 5.2.1: Support programs to strengthen prenatal and neonatal health care and to provide education programs to reduce the infant mortality rates.

State Strategy 5.2.2: Support programs to prevent teen pregnancy.

State Strategy 5.2.3: Support projects that will increase access to health care, information and economic opportunities through telemedicine.

### *Service Area*

Thirty-seven of Alabama's sixty-seven counties are located within the Appalachian Region. These counties are: Bibb, Blount, Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Chilton, Clay, Cleburne, Colbert, Coosa, Cullman, DeKalb, Elmore, Etowah, Fayette, Franklin, Hale, Jackson, Jefferson, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Macon, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan, Pickens, Randolph, St. Clair, Shelby, Talladega, Tallapoosa, Tuscaloosa, Walker, and Winston.

### *Appalachian Development Highway System*

The completion of the Appalachian Development Highway System is a major component of economic growth in Appalachian Alabama. Corridor X will connect Memphis, Tennessee with Atlanta, Georgia. This corridor runs between Birmingham and Itawamba County, Mississippi, and will provide an alternative to U. S. 78, which is the only existing major route in the area. U. S. 78 is a two-lane road that goes through many small towns and has heavy traffic, including heavy trucks. Corridor X will have four lanes and full access control.

Corridor V runs from the Mississippi State Line to the Tennessee State Line and is nearly complete, with 135.5 miles authorized and 97.2 miles completed. However, many sections were built in stages, and additional work will be required, including additional lanes.

Several water and sewer facilities funded in recent years have been clustered near Corridor X in Walker County, in anticipation of the highway's completion. Though Corridors X and V remain important priorities, the State has determined that environmental infrastructure projects have a tremendous impact on the communities that will not benefit directly from the ARC highways. As the highway corridors near completion, in the future, we expect to concentrate more of our activities in areas directly served by the highways.

## **Economic and Social Status of ARC Alabama**

### *Distressed Counties*

ARC's primary objective is to help "distressed" counties generate sufficient economic development to stabilize the respective economy. ARC defines a "distressed" county as such:

1.      a.      per capita market income no greater than 67 percent of the U. S. average; and
- b.      poverty rate at 150 percent of the U.S. average or greater; and
- c.      three-year unemployment at 150 percent of the U.S. average or greater; or
2.      Twice the U.S. poverty rate and either (a) or (c) above.

The distressed counties for the following fiscal years for ARC Alabama are as follows:

<b>FY1999</b>	<b>FY2000</b>	<b>FY2001</b>	<b>FY2002</b>	<b>FY2003</b>
			Bibb	Bibb
			Fayette	Fayette
		Franklin	Franklin	Franklin
Hale	Hale	Hale	Hale	Hale
Macon	Macon	Macon	Macon	Macon
Pickens	Pickens	Pickens	Pickens	Pickens
				Winston

### *Economic Summary*

Appalachian Alabama's population in 2000 was over 2,837,000 with nearly 1,565,000 employed in full or part-time work, or self-employed. These counties account for 64 percent of total employment in the state, which is slightly higher than the Appalachian portion's population share of 63 percent. Manufacturing sectors lost nearly 6 percent of their employment over the 1996-2000 period, although manufacturing still accounts for 20 percent of all private employment. Nonetheless, job losses have been pronounced in the furniture and fixtures industries, lumber and wood products industries, and apparel and textiles. Job growth in the finance, insurance, and real estate sectors increased by 22.4 percent over the 1996-2000 period--a slightly faster pace than the state as whole. Overall, the service sector also posted a higher job growth than the statewide average. Farm and mining employment registered declines as these sectors continued to retrench. Meanwhile, Appalachian Alabama has borne a disproportionate share of reductions in civilian and military federal employment in the state over the last several years.



## **Program Initiatives Review**

### *Project Spending History*

Historically, ARC Alabama has allocated most of its funds to education/job training programs and infrastructure investment. For the fiscal years 1997 – 2001, the following summarized ARC outlays:

Education/Job Training Programs (Goal One): 31%  
Infrastructure or Water/Sewer Programs (Goal Two): 51%  
Leadership or Civic Capacity Training (Goal Three): 5%  
Entrepreneurship (Goal Four): 11%  
Health (Goal Five): 2%

The above is a historical perspective and not a representation of future policy orientation. Use of ARC funds is based on community needs and arising issues within Appalachian Alabama.

### *Review of FY02 Spending*

In FY02, ARC Alabama was allocated \$3.3 million for area development funds, which was used for non-distressed counties. \$868,000 was also allocated for spending in distressed county initiatives, including flex-e-grant programs. \$182,000 was allocated for spending on entrepreneurial regional initiatives. For the fiscal year 2002, the following summarized ARC outlays:

Education/Job Training Programs/Telecommunications (Goal One): 37%  
Infrastructure or Water/Sewer Programs (Goal Two): 33.4%  
Planning, Leadership or Civic Capacity Training (Goal Three): 14.8%  
Entrepreneurship (Goal Four): 14.8%  
Health (Goal Five): 0%

### *LDD Key Initiatives*

**Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments:** (Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion and Winston Counties) NACOLG hosted a meeting of the Alabama Film Commission and elected officials from the region; along with the University of North Alabama, sponsored a Minority and Woman-Owned Business Conference conducted at the Florence-Lauderdale Coliseum in Florence, Alabama. Additionally, NACOLG has worked with the Small Business Development Center at the University of North Alabama in promoting NACOLG's Revolving Loan Fund Program. Area banks have also been contacted with information about the RLF Program. NACOLG also assisted its member governments in the planning and preparation of applications for ARC assistance.

**West Alabama Regional Commission:** (Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa Counties) Region 2 is served by the West Alabama Regional Commission. Greene County is the only non-ARC county. Bibb, Fayette, Hale, and Pickens Counties are all designated as "distressed counties" by ARC. During FY-2002, WARC has

worked closely with the Pickens County Board of Education in the expansion of their existing telecommunications network. This network was expanded to include the vocational school, four medical clinics and the Pickens County Medical Center, and to upgrade distance learning lab equipment in the high schools. The Lamar County Board of Education is also expanding their telecommunications network. Both of these projects have been assisted with ARC dollars.

The LDD has been instrumental in planning the first and second annual Alabama-Mississippi rural tourism conferences and obtaining ARC funding. The goal of the annual conferences is to create or improve local capacity for sustained development of rural tourism initiatives among the many rural communities in both states. The LDD has planned a seminar for local elected officials and county and city administrators on the budgeting process. The goal of the seminar is to improve local capacity to operate efficiently, particularly in the small counties and municipalities where there is limited access to personnel and expertise.

**Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham:** (Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker Counties) are served by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. The LDD continues to assist local boards of education in the development of distance learning capabilities, in particular, Walker and St. Clair. The LDD developed FY-02 ARC grant applications for the West Blount Sanitary Sewage System, the Steele Industrial Park East and the Interstate Industrial Park. The West Blount Sanitary Sewage System, is a new sanitary sewage system located in Smoke Rise that will benefit 15 businesses that will invest \$10 million in land, buildings and equipment resulting in the creation 250 jobs. Water and sewer facilities to be installed in the Steele Industrial Park East will enable three firms to invest \$18.8 million that results in the creation of 192 new jobs. The Interstate Industrial Park project, submitted by the city of Bessemer, was not selected for ARC funding.

**East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission:** (Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega, and Tallapoosa Counties) are served by the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission. EARPDC has supported efforts to develop a workforce that is educated and well trained for employment and has facilitated the implementation of several programs to teach adults basic job skills such as computer training and masonry and to better prepare children to pursue post-secondary education and/or enter the workforce. In FY 2001-2002, grant funds were awarded to improve and expand sewer and water infrastructure to support the needs of a major automotive manufacturer opening a new plant in the region. Two military installations have been turned over to their respective local communities within the last few years, and intensive efforts are underway to create as many jobs as possible through the redevelopment of these properties. Both installations will be redeveloped using mixed land uses including industrial, a wildlife preservation, recreational, residential, and commercial uses. Both CDBG and EDA grants have been awarded to provide infrastructure improvements; EARPDC will continue to pursue grant opportunities in the future.

EARPDC continues to increase leadership and administrative capabilities of local government officials through training seminars at the monthly meetings of the EAC Board of Directors. EARPDC also encourages local officials, staff, and boards to participate in statewide conferences and training sessions by running articles about upcoming events in its monthly newsletter, which is distributed extensively throughout the region and the state, and by sending brochures to its mailing list.

**South Central Alabama Development Commission:** (Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes, Macon, and Pike Counties). Served by the South Central Alabama Development Commission, Macon County is the only Appalachian county in Local Development District 5. This county of 24,105 persons is also an ARC designated “distressed” county. Plagued by higher than average unemployment, high family poverty, and low per capita income rates, Macon County has undergone and is experiencing efforts to remedy these troubling figures. During FY 2002, several projects received ARC support and funding. Each of these projects came about as a result of implementing the goals and objectives identified in the State’s *Annual Strategy Statement, FY 2002*, as well as other locals plans and strategies (e.g., *Tuskegee 2010 Comprehensive Plan* and the *Bullock/Macon Counties Strategic Plan, 2002-2012*).

**Central Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission:** (Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery Counties). Served by the Central Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, Elmore County is the only Appalachian county in this Region. CARPDC is currently studying community facilities and transportation access in the LDD. The purpose is to determine the stress that growth is placing on services and to assess the potential for declines in the quality of life that made the Elmore County attractive for residential growth. In the short-term future it is expected that residential growth will increase to provide market areas sufficient to support larger shopping areas and local employment centers, including satellite office complexes and suburban industrial parks. CARPDC plans to advocate growth corridors and areas; provide assistance to local governments to rehabilitate and sustain existing business districts; and develop new business/industrial parks. This will prevent economic decline and stagnation, preserve the existing tax base, and ensure complementary new growth consistent with infrastructure and facility support capabilities.

**North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments:** (Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan Counties) is served by the North-Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments. NARCOG prepared an ARC application for the Town of Eva, Morgan County, requesting \$200,000 to assist in the construction of an innovative collection, treatment and disposal system. An estimated 147 jobs will be created and 107 jobs will be retained. The Town of Dodge City, Cullman County, received an ARC grant for \$200,000 to assist in the construction of a sewer system, which will result in the creation of 234 new jobs. Additionally, NARCOG has been very successful in the creation of new jobs through its Revolving Loan Fund Program, thus reducing the unemployment in the NARCOG Region. A total of 17 loans have been made from the \$1.5 Million Revolving Loan Fund, leveraging \$14.6 Million in private dollars and creating 420 jobs averaging \$3,700 per job. NARCOG also coordinated with Decatur Business Incubator, Decatur-

Morgan County Chamber of Commerce and UNA Small Business Development Center in conducting a seminar on Small Business Financing with some 100 in attendance.

During 2002, the LDD staff attended various seminars and meetings in an effort to obtain information and serve as a liaison with local governments. NARCOG continues to promote the LDD through the use of a visual display, which is set up at major conferences, local events and local governments, in addition to the mail out of a quarterly newsletter to approximately 1,000 persons in the NARCOG Region.

**Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments:** (DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, and Marshall Counties) are served by the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments. During the 2002 Project Year, The TARCOG LDD has performed a variety of services to aide the region's citizens. Grant/Application preparation, technical assistance, and proactive facilitation have made up the bulk of these services. A myriad of other grant/technical support efforts involving the COPS program, TEA-21, LLEBG, the CDBG Community Enhancement Grant program, have also been supported. The LDD staff has facilitated EDA support for local workforce development efforts at Calhoun Community College and vocational training for industry efforts in DeKalb and Marshall Counties.

The LDD acted as the lead agency in the preparation of the region's element of the State's on going Strategic Plan; and, worked on two major on-going local planning projects, including the ARC funded Strategic Plan for Scottsboro. Staff members also attended various courses and seminars on RLF financial issues, GIS applications, and environmental issues in order to maintain their technical/professional proficiency.

During 2002, the LDD staff maintained a vigorous effort to provide local liaison and information through attendance in a variety of seminars and meetings. These issues, many of which were highlighted in the District's publication – *The Reporter*, covered a broad spectrum of issues, ranging from lead based paint, water quality, and women and minority business issues, to Medicaid fraud prevention programs.

### **Future Program Initiatives for FY03**

#### *Overview of FY03 Projected Outlays*

It is anticipated that ARC Alabama in FY03 will receive an amount similar to that of FY02. Spending will likely follow regular patterns comparable to prior years; however, particular emphasis will be placed on industrial job training and telecommunications projects.

#### *Special Initiatives*

The State of Alabama will continue to participate in the ARC Export Trade Advisory Council (ETAC) and will support efforts to increase international trade and export development in

Appalachian Alabama. The State will also assist in recruiting industries for trade expeditions and trade shows related to ETAC.

ARC Alabama will participate in the Flex-E-Grant Program for FY-2003 and through this program will continue to address technical assistance, leadership and civic capacity needs in Alabama's distressed counties.

The ARC Program Manager conducts an annual ARC Applications Workshop in August of each year, and speaks about the ARC program annually at the CDBG Applications Workshop. These workshops are opportunities to distribute information about the Appalachian Regional Commission program, and to provide technical assistance in the submission of preapplications and applications.

### *LDD Key Initiatives*

**Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments:** (Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion and Winston Counties) is served by the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG). In FY 2003, NACOLG plans to again sponsor the Minority and Woman-Owned Business Conference. NACOLG will also continue to promote the film industry in District 1. As a part of this promotion, ARC funding may be solicited to be used for collection and organization of a database to include a photographic file of interesting locations in the five-county region. This database can also be used to promote tourism in the area.

Other projects planned for 2003 include: 1) Providing technical assistance to the City of Muscle Shoals in the development of an Airport Industrial Park at the Northwest Alabama Regional Airport; 2) Assisting Marion County in the development of a Marion County, AL/State of Mississippi Industrial Park on Corridor X; and 3) Assisting Winston County in developing an industrial park on the Winston County/Cullman County line. As evidenced by these proposed projects, a regional concept is being promoted. NACOLG will work with the Town of Addison in their attempts to pursue funding to expand sewer to their business and school district. Adult education and family literacy will continue to be a major priority in District 1. Telecommunication projects will be explored and promoted as opportunities for such projects are developed.

**West Alabama Regional Commission:** (Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa Counties) are served by the West Alabama Regional Commission. WARC plans to work closely in FY-03 with the Internet Access in Rural Alabama program to strengthen its telecommunications initiative, and will assist with seminars.

An additional focus will be on workforce development, and emphasis will be placed on working with existing industry to assist in training and expansion. Rural tourism will continue to be a regional initiative in the West Alabama Region, particularly through our

partnership with the Tuscaloosa Convention and Visitors Bureau. Working with health councils, the LDD will identify strategies for local programs to prevent teen pregnancy.

**Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham:** (Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker Counties) are served by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham.

In anticipation of the FY-03 funding cycle, meetings have been held with superintendents of the county boards of education in Blount, Chilton and Shelby Counties relative to the establishment of county or multi-county distance learning networks

The LDD also anticipates assisting the Moody Commercial Development Authority with the further development of the Moody Business and Technology Park. The LDD will continue to work with the various Jefferson County entities to determine the feasibility of installing fiber in the sewer, and research what impact fiber in the sewer has upon sewer maintenance activities. Other future initiatives include conducting a Sanitary Sewer Feasibility Study for the Town of West Jefferson, assisting the City of Dora with the further development of the Horse Creek Industrial Park, and continue providing administrative support during the construction phases to the Blount County Commission and its West Blount County Sanitary Sewer Project, funded by ARC and EPA and to the Town of Steele for its Steele Industrial Park East, funded by ARC and EDA.

**East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission:** (Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega, and Tallapoosa Counties) is served by the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission. Future projects include the possibility of improving education at the secondary and possibly elementary levels by introducing teleconferencing capabilities into the schools systems of the region.

EARPDC has pursued every opportunity to offset the cost of improving the water, sewer and road systems in the region. We maintain a water and sewer inventory by county that includes a report outlining the service and capability of each system and a map showing each system's lines for each county. The report portion was updated in 2002. The maps will be updated in 2003. We continue to pursue grant opportunities to improve infrastructure to brownfield areas as well as greenfield areas.

Another aspect the Commission is considering is Contingency Planning for municipalities. Initial investigation shows that very few businesses and municipalities have or maintain contingency plans on any level. In 2003 a survey will be conducted to determine if local jurisdictions are be interested in these plans. Meetings will be held at the local government level and groundwork initiated for a Contingency Plan for those local governments where interest is shown.

In the coming year, EARPDC will develop a Recreation Inventory for the Region that includes both recreational facilities funded by grants and those constructed without grant assistance. Grant funding will be pursued for those areas with little or no recreational

opportunities to promote health and physical fitness for all age groups, especially children and senior adults. Some recreation improvements have already been made in the most economically distressed parts of the region through the Enterprise Community program. As administrator of these funds, the EARPDC has facilitated the construction of playgrounds, ball fields, and basketball courts, the purchase of athletic equipment and band instruments, and the hiring of recreation coordinators to organize activities that will put the equipment and facilities to use.

**South Central Alabama Development Commission:** (Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes, Macon, and Pike Counties). With the assistance of SCADC, Macon County and its municipalities will continue to implement the projects referenced in FY-2002. The county and the towns will also continue to identify and develop projects for future consideration that will meet or exceed the State's ARC goals and objectives. Broad goals have been recognized at the county and municipal levels that complement the ARC goals, which will assist in driving project identification and development.

- Continuing the development and implementation of a Downtown Revitalization Plan for the City of Tuskegee;
- In tandem with the Downtown Revitalization Plan, making infrastructure, structural, and aesthetic improvements to the Tuskegee Downtown Area;
- Continuing implementation of the Tuskegee sanitary sewer system rehabilitation project;
- Developing the existing industrial and commercial parks and sites within Macon County, to include improvements and upgrades to infrastructure resources and utility services;
- Establishing an Adult Day Health Center, to include the needs for the rehabilitation and/or expansion of existing facilities and programs;
- Rehabilitating the Abbott Park Community Center in Tuskegee;
- Expanding and upgrading the local water system infrastructure for the Town of Shorter;
- Developing a county-wide Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance for the unincorporated areas of Macon County in order to provide county officials and residents with the basic planning tools necessary to promote community and economic development;
- Developing a Community Center/Administrative Building in the Star-Mindingall community and its W&FPA service area; and
- Continuing implementation of the ARC-funded *Tuskegee & Macon County Tourism Development Plan*, including the development of a Visitors Center facility and the construction of a Gift Shop addition to the Tuskegee Human & Civil Rights Multicultural Center.

**Central Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission:** (Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery Counties). Served by the Central Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, Elmore is the only Appalachian county in this Region. CARPDC is currently studying community facilities and transportation access in the LDD. The purpose is to determine the stress that growth is placing on services and to assess the potential for declines in the quality of life that made the Elmore County attractive for residential growth. In the short-term future it is expected that residential growth will increase to provide market areas sufficient to support larger shopping areas and local employment centers, including satellite office complexes and suburban industrial parks. CARPDC plans to advocate growth corridors and areas; provide assistance to local governments to rehabilitate and sustain existing business districts; and develop new business / industrial parks. This will prevent economic decline and

stagnation, preserve the existing tax base, and ensure complementary new growth consistent with infrastructure and facility support capabilities.

**North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments:** (Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan Counties) are served by the North-Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments. NARCOG staff will be mailing ARC grant information for FY 2003 to all member governments and communities within the Region. The Town of Eva application for a sewer system will be resubmitted for FY 2003.

NARCOG will seek funding to increase the Revolving Loan Fund asset base in the Region, and will also seek opportunities for conducting seminars providing information on financing needs and will attend workshops and conferences focusing on the financing needs of small businesses.

**Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments:** (DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, and Marshall Counties) is served by the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments. During the 2003 program year, the LDD expects to continue with these efforts to increase the quality of life for the District's citizens. Technical assistance and grant support, especially relating to regular grant programs, "targets of opportunity" and any local "crisis response" actions, are expected to continue to be the major focus of staff effort. Based on Present and pending project actions, LDD supported infrastructure development projects are expected to generate at least 500 permanent jobs. New RLF efforts are projected to loan over \$200K, generate over \$500K in private investment and create 40-50 new jobs. Continued support of area USDA Community Facilities Loan Program applications (an estimated 3-5 communities will be assisted. Major grant application support activity will be provided again for the vital T-21, LWCF, RTP, CDBG and FEMA/FIRE Grant Programs. District staff support and facilitation of the District's element of State Strategic Plan will continue. Upon the completion of the Plan, the LDD will serve as a major interactive catalyst to facilitate action for the implementation of the prioritized projects and goals. The Scottsboro Strategic Plan will be followed up with a program of support efforts for implementing major objectives in workforce development, downtown revitalization and tourism attraction/enhancement.

Ongoing staff participation in vital information streaming on business incubators, job retention training, workforce development coordination and advocacy, and critical environmental issues will continue. In addition, the District's LDD staff will monitor vital unfolding Homeland Security issues and keep the District advised on potential impacts at the local level.

#### **State Program Policies**

The State of Alabama's Appalachian Regional Commission Program will focus primarily on areas of highest need, areas suffering from economic depression, areas with existing health hazards, areas where projects will have the most significant impact, and areas that are not able to help themselves. Each project for which ARC funding is requested will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must contain performance measures consistent with those set by the Commission in their Performance Plan for FY2003. The State's



maximum threshold for counties designated by the ARC as “distressed” will be 80 percent with a maximum of \$200,000 in ARC funds per project. The maximum threshold for counties designated by the ARC as “transitional” will be 50 percent with a maximum of \$200,000 in ARC funds per project. State thresholds for Administrative Grants for Local Development Districts (LDDs) will be 50 percent, except for those LDDs with “distressed counties: the threshold will be 75 percent with a 25 percent match. The State’s Consolidated Technical Assistance program will be funded at a maximum of 50 percent. The maximum threshold for counties designated as “competitive” will be 30 percent with a maximum of \$200,000 in ARC funds per project. ARC funds are ineligible for activities occurring in counties designated as “attainment,” except in the case of multi-county projects, which provide clearly defined benefits in one or more “distressed” counties. A waiver of the restriction for “attainment” counties may be requested in accordance with Section 7-6.6 of the ARC Code. Funding for Revolving Loan (RLF) programs will be considered with respect to established Commission-approved RLF Guidelines.

The state will work closely with the Alabama Development Office in efforts to increase trade in Appalachian Alabama, and will participate in trade events as well as events sponsored by the ARC Export Trade Advisory Council. The State of Alabama will support programs that increase export sales of small and medium-sized firms (SME’s) from Appalachian Alabama as well as programs that increase the number of SME’s engaged in international trade.

The State will not fund projects to construct or renovate school buildings, except in emergency situations. Project overruns will not generally be considered for additional ARC funding. When there are project underruns, ARC funds will generally be deobligated, returned, and made available for other eligible projects. A request for proportional reduction will be given consideration in projects with underruns.

Under certain circumstances, the state may waive the state policy maximum of \$200,000 per project. The State will target areas of greatest need, and will respond with ARC funding in emergency situations and whenever special development opportunities arise. The maximum threshold for emergency relief projects and projects considered as special development opportunities will be 80/20.

The State of Alabama will work closely with national and local partners to foster public and private partnerships to achieve these goals and objectives.

All project applications submitted as a regional initiative will be required to include performance measures as a part of the application process. All projects submitted to the state for ARC funding must have output and outcome measures included in an evaluation plan from the grantee.

## **Appendix 1**

### *LDD Directory*

#### **NORTHWEST – Region 1**

*Executive Director:* Keith Jones  
*Address:* Northwest Alabama Council  
of Local Governments  
PO Box 2603  
Muscle Shoals, AL 35662  
*Telephone:* 256-389-0500  
*Counties Included:* Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion, Winston

#### **NORTH CENTRAL – Region 11**

*Executive Director:* C. Ronald Matthews  
*Address:* North Central Alabama Regional  
Council of Governments  
(216 Jackson Street, SE)  
P.O. Box C  
Decatur, AL 35602  
*Telephone:* 256-355-4515  
*Counties Included:* Cullman, Lawrence, Morgan

#### **TOP OF ALABAMA –Region 12**

*Executive Director:* Robert B. Culver  
Top of Alabama Regional Council  
of Governments  
115 Washington Street, S.E.  
Huntsville, AL 35801  
*Telephone:* 256-533-3330  
*Counties Included:* DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, Marshall

#### **WEST ALABAMA – Region 2**

*Executive Director:* Robert B. Lake  
West Alabama Regional  
Commission  
4200 Highway 69, North, Suite 1  
Northport, AL 35473  
*Telephone:* 205-333-2990  
*Counties Included:* Bibb, Fayette, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa, (Greene)

#### **Greater BIRMINGHAM-Region 3**

*Executive Director:* Larry Watts  
*Address:* Birmingham Regional Planning  
Commission  
2112 Eleventh Ave., South  
Magnolia Office Park, Suite 220  
Birmingham, AL 35205  
*Telephone:* 205-251-8139  
*Counties Included:* Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Cherokee, St. Clair, Shelby, Walker

**EAST ALABAMA – Region 4**

*Executive Director:* James W. (Bill) Curtis, AICP  
*Address:* East Alabama Regional Planning  
& Development Commission  
(1130 Quintard Ave., Suite 300)  
P.O. Box 2186  
Anniston, AL 36202  
*Telephone:* 256-237-6741  
*Counties Included:* Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega,  
Tallapoosa

**CENTRAL ALABAMA – Region 9**

*Executive Director:* Robert Grasser  
*Address:* Central Alabama Regional  
Planning & Dev. Commission  
125 Washington Ave. 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Montgomery, AL 36101-0051  
*Telephone:* 334-262-4300  
*Counties Included:* Elmore (Autauga, Montgomery)

**SOUTH CENTRAL ALABAMA – Region 5**

*Executive Director:* Tyson Howard  
*Address:* South Central Alabama  
Development Commission  
5900 Carmichael Place  
Montgomery, AL 36117  
*Telephone:* 334-244-6903  
*Counties Included:* Macon (Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes, Pike)